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Mooney, C.P.J.

The Confederacy After July 9, 1863

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B. FORREST, Adjutant General,
Sons of Confederate Veterans,

THE
MEMPHIS, TENN.
CONFEDERACY
AFTER
JULY 4, 1863

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

MR. C. P. J. MOONEY

AT THE

MEMORIAL DAY EXERCISES

IN MEMPHIS

NINETEEN HUNDRED THIRTEEN

MEMPHIS
WANTS THE
VETERANS
IN 1915

PUBLISHED BY THE
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THE CONFEDERACY AFTER JULY 4, 1863

"This is to many of you a day of memory and tears. We are gathered here to pay tribute to those who died and to do honor to those Confederates who live and to the cause for which they fought.

"The war is a half century gone. Another generation, whose members are now in the noonday of life, has been born since the flag of the Confederacy was furled. The living Confederate soldiers, the youngest of them, are around three score and ten.

"I desire to-day, with your permission, to call your attention to certain lessons of this war which are now being studied by the philosophers of history and certain facts in the struggle to which military experts are giving close attention.

"To the student of history, to the student of war and to the student of the endurance of men, the history of the Confederacy presents some striking problems.

"Those who are in the midst of things often fail to see that chain of incidents which turns the currents of human actions. The contemporary is not a good historian. He is interesting in writing his experience and his memoirs.

"I think this is a time when men who study the progress of government and the progress of civilization should begin to give attention to an analytical discussion of the history of the

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Confederacy and begin to draw from it conclusion, in which they may be greatly assisted by those Confederates and those Federals who survive.

"The history of the war has not yet been written. But when the commentator finishes his study of the Confederacy he will give to the world a story of the most marvelous struggle that men ever sustained.

"And he will wonder how it were possible for the Confederacy to maintain itself from July 4, 1863, until the disbanding of Lee's army at Appomattox in the spring of 1865.

"What matchless quality was it that enabled the soldiers of the lost cause to carry the Confederacy aloft upon the points of their swords through the year 1864?

"The climax fact of the Confederacy is its duration. With your permission I will briefly discuss certain things in that period of the Confederacy when by all of the rules of war the trial of strength should have been over.

"To my mind the fate of the Confederacy was sealed at Vicksburg and Gettysburg. Then let us see how it was, and why it was that this titanic struggle lasted 22 months longer.

Hour of the Supreme Struggle

"Fifty years ago this month the Confederacy was in the supreme struggle for its life.

"The strongest of the fortified places on the Mississippi held by the Confederates was Vicksburg. In the month of June, 1863, Pemberton was shut in and Grant's army was pressing him from the east. The Federal gunboats were sending their messages of death into the beleaguered city from the reaches of the river. The Confederates had not lost hope of relieving Pemberton by an attack from toward Jackson. During the warm days of that terrible June, Grant, having learned the foolhardiness of direct assault, set down to the less brilliant but more effective method of a sustained siege. The Federals held the river at New Orleans and above Vicksburg. Johnson could not draw enough

men away from the lines that protected the Confederates' northern outposts in Alabama and Georgia to give him strength that would enable him to strike Grant in the rear.

"The spirit of the men within the trenches at Vicksburg was the same spirit that was a peculiar mark of the Confederacy. Those who had studied the rules of war knew that in the end there must be a surrender. All during this month of June they fought on with the same steady valor that marked the Confederate whether he was charging to victory or defeat.

"In the east the Federals were uneasy. In every pitched battle, except that of Sharpsburg, they had been beaten. Each side claims a victory at Sharpsburg. The student of history will probably call it a drawn fight, for while McClellan held the field and Lee withdrew, the Federal commander did not pursue him. McClellan was censured for this by the editor-generals of the north and by the politicians who fought the war from the safe recesses of the speakers' stand at barbecues. McClellan gave up his command and those who followed him, when they did attack toward the end of the year, saw their armies cut to pieces on the heights of Fredericksburg.

"Another general, in the fall of '63, did what McClellan did in the fall of '62, but he was not blamed. Grant, however, had a victory to his credit; McClellan had none, only a drawn fight. The forces under Grant beat Bragg's army at Missionary Ridge, but the Federals did not follow up the fight until April of the next year. Grant in the meantime was transferred to Washington and the work of taking up the thread of war in the west following Missionary Ridge was not begun until Sherman started to Atlanta.

Gettysburg in '63

"Fifty years ago to-day if the Federals were gaining confidence in the west, they were sorely troubled in the east. General Lee, who was far-seeing, felt that a chance for victory and for ultimate peace was an inva-

sion of the North. For a month before July 3 of '63 his adversaries could not divine his purposes. They felt his army, but they could not grapple with it. Their strategy would have been to have fought with him in Virginia, but so eager were they to protect Washington that Lee crossed into Maryland without opposition. And then the armies marched in parallel lines. Hooker was removed and it fell to the lot of Meade to fight Gettysburg. The place was neither Meade's nor General Lee's choosing. General Lee knew that a great army was in front of him and that at some point in his march to the north it would lie across his path. And the Federals knew that a hitherto unbeaten army under the command of a matchless leader was coming headlong at them and that a victory would result, not from superior bravery nor superior marksmanship, not from the enthusiasm that with courage conquers victory, but must come from force of numbers.

"You know the story of Gettysburg. The invading army of the Confederacy spent its force there. Sullenly the Confederates fell back. Leisurely they retraced their steps into Virginia. The Federals did not follow. The Confederates may have received their death wound at Gettysburg, but they concealed the hurt from the adversary.

Might Have Ended in '63

"By all the rules of war Vicksburg and Gettysburg should have marked the collapse of the aggressive fighting strength of the south. The Confederate States were cut in two by Federal armies commanding every bend of the Mississippi River from Cairo to New Orleans. The Federals had driven their line down to North Mississippi to the Tennessee River and to Chattanooga. Following Vicksburg and Gettysburg an offer of a settlement might have been made. Jefferson Davis, the head of the Confederacy, might have said, 'We have fought a good fight. The fortunes of war are against us. What have you to offer?'

"The Federal fleet was at the mouth of every river that empties into the sea. Only two Confederate flags were on the high seas. One was borne aloft and defended with a knightly valor by Admiral Semmes, who's own daughter every year is present in this cemetery at this service and who to-day sits on this stand. Later another Confederate flag was unfurled on the ocean, was carried into every sea by a band of gallant men, one of whom has the honor to-day of commanding the uniformed Confederates sitting in front of us. Two Confederate ships could make but small progress against a fleet which could patrol the Atlantic coast from Maine to Mexico with a line of ships so close that one was always in sight of another.

"A cordon of Federal troops was drawn from Arkansas, across Tennessee and up the valley of Virginia. The only supplies that could be imported were those that came from intermittent landings of blockade runners. The Confederate soldier could have surrendered in July of '63 and the world would have said he fought a good fight.

"And the leaders from that time on knew that the chances were against success and the private soldiers had little hope of ultimate victory.

"I desire to suggest for your consideration this thought: The glory of the Confederacy is in its defeat. A faint hope for success was in sustaining a defensive warfare so long that the patience and the spirit of the northern soldier and the northern people might wear away. There might have been a further hope that conflicting political opinions in the North would finally divide the people and, weary, they might be content to recognize the Confederacy as a separate entity. But to the glory of the Confederate soldier he did not trust to these forces.

"He trusted his cause to the arbitrament of the sword and he was willing to decide it by shot and shell, by force of arms, if you please, and not by the indirection of diplomacy.

Victory After Defeat

"The marvel to me is that after Gettysburg and after Vicksburg the Confederate soldier had the heart to fight at Chickamauga. And yet before the shouts of victory and joy had ceased in the North, because of Vicksburg and Gettysburg, the Confederates brought a magnificent fighting machine into play against another Federal army, beat it, captured thousands of its men and all but annihilated it at Chickamauga.

"Chickamauga, I believe, more nearly struck terror into the hearts of the brave men of the north than any other contest.

"The First Manassas was a stampede. There raw soldiers were matched against raw soldiers. But at Chickamauga trained men fought trained men. Skillful generals matched their wits against equally skillful adversaries. The victory, by all rules of the game, should have gone to the Federals. Instead they found themselves beaten and shut up in a city.

Grant and Sherman

"The Confederate victory did not surprise Grant and it did not surprise Sherman. These men knew the character of their foes. Sherman had taught school among them in Louisiana and Grant had campaigned with them in Mexico and in the West. Sherman knew and Grant knew that so long as Mr. Davis did not give the signal to give in that a sense of duty would impel Lee and Johnson and Hood and Longstreet to press on with the same determination that would mark them if they were going to certain victory instead of certain defeat.

"There is bitterness in the South against Sherman. Sherman may have been bitter himself against the cause of the South, but he knew the fiber of his foe, and while he may have hated him for his cause, he respected him for his knightly valor. There was no hatred in the heart of Grant. He was a man of clear vision. In dealing with the Confederacy he weighed their valor, their determina-

tion, and in the contest reckoned on these qualities to cause the Confederate soldier to toss his life away with the same reckless abandon as a boy throws away a flower.

“Grant should have annihilated Bragg’s army at Missionary Ridge. He should have pressed that soldier so hard that Atlanta should have fallen at Christmas of ’63 instead of at the end of the next summer.

“And while these things were happening in the West how fared it in the fall and winter of ’63 with Lee. He did not escape back from Gettysburg into Richmond. He moved in orderly and stately procession. Meade followed at a respectful distance. Though he may have beaten Lee at Gettysburg his victory inspired in his breast no confidence that he might beat him again. After Vicksburg and after Gettysburg the Federals marked time during the winter until new forces could be drawn up, until new supplies could be brought in, until new troops could be levied.

The Winter of ’63

“How fared it this winter with the Confederacy. There were no more troops to be had. A few old men and a few boys stepped into the depleted ranks—just a few. No nation sent its countless hordes as food for powder through Southern ports into Southern armies. When a soldier on the firing line at Missionary Ridge or around the foothills of Virginia was picked off there was no one else to take his place. The army was reduced that many. Grant, the mathematician of war, who knew that victory would finally come if two went out against one, bided his time after he came out of the West until he had forces sufficient to overwhelm his adversaries. Then we find him moving against Richmond in ’64, taking the same route over which three years previous another army went out from Washington on a holiday journey. Grant consumed a year in making that journey. His army spent more than a billion dollars in that journey. They suffered

a loss in killed and wounded of more than 100,000 men. On that journey from the environs of Washington down to Appomattox the army of Grant lost more men in killed and wounded than did General Lee command fighting men.

“And the same summer in the West Sherman began the 150-mile trip from Chattanooga to Atlanta, a journey which you and I can now make in a morning, and on every mile of that journey there was a skirmish and during every week of that journey there was a battle. It is said that Sherman lost more men in killed, wounded and prisoners than were the number of Confederates that stood up and responded ‘present’ to Joseph E. Johnson’s roll call.

Memphis in '64

“And how fared it farther in the West? In our own city of Memphis, how was it? The Federals held the river. An army as large almost as were the numbers on one side at Shiloh was encamped in and around this city. They sent one expedition out after another and these were not mere parties of raiders. They were armies made up of every desired unit—infantry, cavalry and artillery. And every expedition was beaten back. Finally, in the heat of the summer General Forrest’s men rode through the streets of this city and General Forrest himself stood at bay near the State Female College, which is only a stone’s throw from this spot.

“And after Atlanta, when Hood’s army should have disbanded, instead of surrendering it became an invader. Sweeping around Sherman it struck out boldly for the Ohio River as an objective. It began the invasion of Tennessee and Kentucky, where a Federal garrison was in almost every county.

Gettysburg and Franklin

“This summer Confederate and Federal, at the invitation of the national government, are to meet on the hills of Gettysburg and join there as citizens of a reunited country

in celebrating the valor of those who followed Meade and those who followed Lee. Gettysburg is remembered because it is dramatic. It was the crisis of the struggle. The eyes of the world were turned toward that field when Pickett made his charge and failed. The Creator never put it into the hearts of men to do more than did those Confederates who for three days gave battle at Gettysburg.

"But let me say that the Confederate soldiers at Franklin gave an exhibition of courage, endurance and daring which resulted in an engagement unparalleled in the history of warfare. They assaulted an enemy as numerous or more numerous than themselves, having the advantage of being on the defensive and having the further advantage of temporary breastworks. And when all was over, major-generals and brigadiers to the number of six were killed. When morning came the Federals were crowding the thoroughfares to Nashville and the Confederates held the blood-stained field. A victory for Pickett at Gettysburg might have turned the scales for the Confederacy. Pickett failed. A victory for the Confederacy at Franklin simply postponed the day of doom. The officers who led the men into that fight knew it. Then why such matchless valor? Why did men toss their lives away as though life was a vain and empty thing? Because this Civil War of ours was to be the epic tragedy of our country. And these Confederate soldiers were determined that its climax should be such that through all the ages it would be the glory of our people.

The Dying Confederacy

"A sense of duty filled the ranks of the Confederacy in '61, and that same loyalty to duty, that same devotion to a principle, filled the valleys with the graves of the dead, took away from wives their husbands and made orphans in many homes.

"The war might have ended in '63, but the men under the Stars and Bars were determined to go on even to the bitter end, and if need be, each man was determined to yield his life.

“And how magnificently the Confederacy died! After Franklin a skeleton army pursued Schofield into Nashville. And Thomas, a cool and calculating man, tried the patience of Grant, who demanded that he immediately give battle. Grant saw at Nashville the strange spectacle of a well-fed, well-equipped army, stronger in numbers than was the wreck of Hood’s fighting machine, torn to pieces by the shock of its own victory at Franklin, being besieged for a month. Grant became uneasy. He remembered the fight they gave him at Missionary Ridge. He knew how bitterly the same soldiers contended with Sherman; he measured the force of their strength against Schofield at Franklin, and he feared that this army, whose ranks were decimated by the bullets from a hundred fields, might in its dying hour make its death memorable by destroying the army of Thomas in Nashville.

“Thomas also knew the strength that was still there. He also knew the desperate spirit of a foe that fought just as well under a certainty of ultimate failure as though it were marching to a certain victory. The stuff that was in the men who followed Hood into Tennessee was of that brand of courage that marks those who step from the ranks to lead a forlorn hope. Grant sent Logan to supersede Thomas, if Thomas had not fought when Logan reached Nashville. When Thomas had made a victory certain by overwhelming odds of men under his flag, he gave battle. And even then there was no rout. Beaten down, Hood’s veterans retraced their steps southward. But there was no pursuit by oncoming cavalry, no sabering down of stragglers. The story of the Confederate rear guard fighting from Nashville to the Tennessee River under the direction of Walthall and Forrest is in itself a magnificent incident of this strange and matchless expedition from Atlanta to Nashville.

“Sherman had an easy march from Atlanta to Savannah, because there were no soldiers in his path. It was a different story from

Savannah north. A remnant of the old army that fought him under Johnston and had under Hood fought at Franklin and Nashville, again crossed Sherman's path and engaged him.

"When Lee felt that it was no longer good strategy to hold Richmond, the Confederate army drew out of Petersburg. According to all the rules of war, that army should have been captured. And then, if you follow this journey from Richmond and Petersburg to Appomattox, you will find that every day when the Confederates made a stand they were not driven away from the field. And the day before the surrender at Appomattox the Confederates engaged in a pitched battle with their foe, and in that fight conducted themselves with the same gallantry that marked them at Fredericksburg and at Chancellorsville, when they were driving everything before them.

Triumphant at the End

"A close study of the last two years of this war will convince any man that it is no empty boast to say that the Confederate soldier went down into defeat, triumphant until the reverberation of the last gun shot lost itself amid the blood-stained hills of Virginia.

"The Old Guard at Waterloo, after its charge failed, broke into disorder, and the army which followed the eagles of Napoleon at Borodino, at Eylau, at Austerlitz, and never before reeled in the shock of war, when the knowledge of defeat came, broke into a wild, disorganized and frenzied mob.

"In Virginia, in Tennessee, in Georgia and in Mississippi the Confederate armies after '63 never lost step, never turned to the right nor to the left, but pressed onward into the valleys of death with a steadiness of purpose, with a heroic valor that is to-day the glory of the American citizen, no matter whether he be Confederate or Federal or born into this world when the Confederacy had become a memory.

"And here we are in this marvel country of ours fifty years after the war, on a day of

memory for Confederate soldiers ready to pay tribute to the bravery of men and not asking on which side they fought.

“The history of the Confederacy is a history of the nation. The matchless skill of Lee, the persistence of Grant are inspiring to every American boy and girl, it matters little whether they gather in the evening under the shade of the scented magnolia or under the Green Mountain pines whose boughs tremble in response to the sigh of the breeze that comes from the north.

Its Effect

“The great Civil War gave to other nations in letters of fire a story of the colossal possibilities of these United States. And so long as we keep the memory of those in whose honor to-day we meet fresh in our hearts and in the hearts of our children, we will be inspired to lofty ideals and there will be created in our hearts a determination that this country of ours shall go forward and that the guiding principle of its people shall be national honor, the hope of its people shall be national glory and the determination of its people shall be freedom under the law and under the constitution.

“Honor the Confederate dead; honor the living Confederates, for they are the survivors of an army that responded to many demands that could be met by lofty courage and devotion to home and to country.

“Appomattox did not mark the close of the career of the Confederate soldier. From '65 until this good day wherever he has been he has borne himself as a man and as a leader of men. In the ashes of Confederacy's hope he sat up a torch which was a signal that the traditions of the South should never be forgotten and the civilization of the South should be forwarded.

“In the work of recreating the Confederate soldier was a leader. The imprint of the Confederate soldier is heavy upon the civil history of this country since 1865. In the Senate of the United States, in the lower house

of Congress, the Confederate soldier did duty to the south and to the common country alike. In the State Legislature, as governors, as lawyers, as judges, the Confederate soldiers have made their mark.

"To-day the chief justice of the greatest court on earth, a court which is the guardian of the nation's ark of the covenant, is a Confederate soldier. Another Confederate soldier is an associate justice. Confederate soldiers have been in the cabinet. They have served as foreign ministers. When the call to arms came in '98 they leapt into the firing line. They have served their people as physicians, as teachers, as preachers, and merchants, and they have served in the hard occupations, at the plow and at the forge. Whether the Confederate soldier stands at the handle of the plow or raises his hand to administer oath to an incoming president, he is the embodiment of unselfish devotion to the work that is at hand and loyal to the duty that is to be discharged.

"And the Confederate soldier's day of usefulness is not over. The youngest of you are around seventy. You are in the lean shank. But when you are eighty—and a few of you will reach that age—you will then not be in the way, for our grandchildren, little boys and girls, may then gather at your knees in the shadows of the dying day and hear from your lips the story of your part in a struggle which will be the glory of this nation and an inspiration to this people so long as the republic survives.

"Gentlemen of the Old Guard in Gray, followers of Lee, Forrest, Johnson and Hood, I salute you."

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